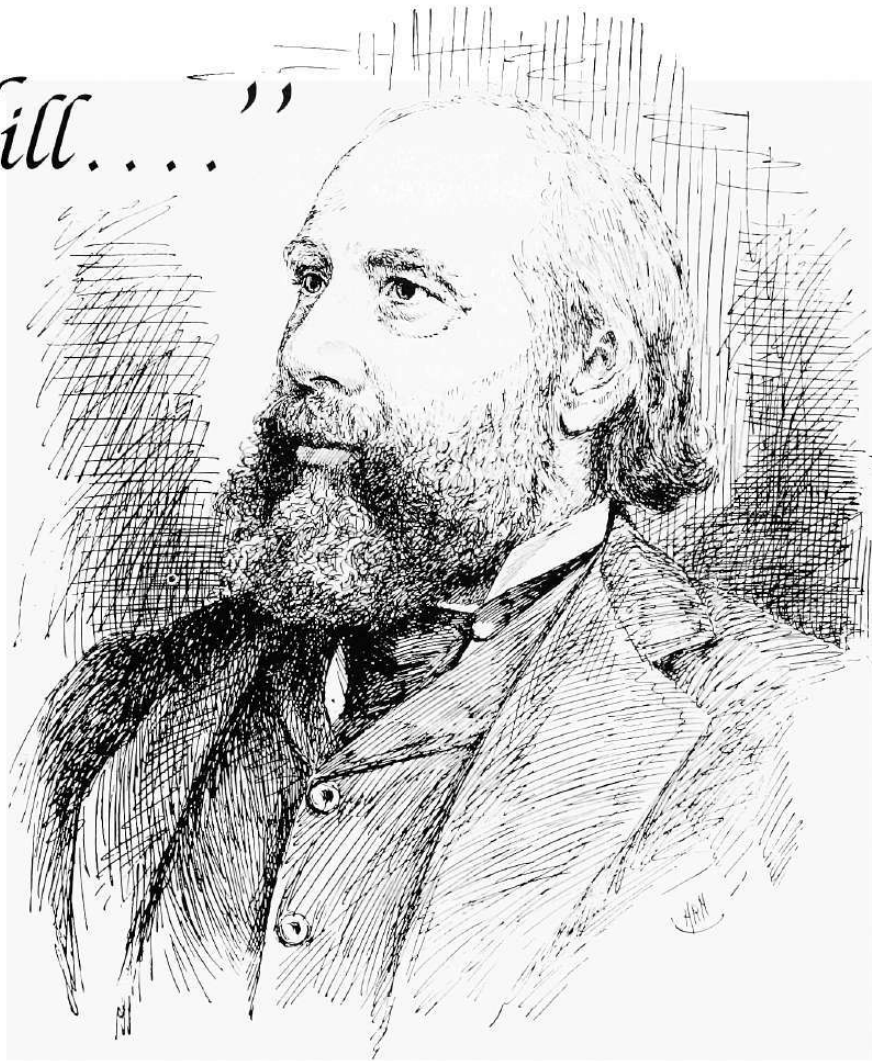


"Dear Mr. Hill...."

LETTERS TO THE EMPIRE BUILDER 1876-95

Carol J. Berg, O.S.B.



THE OPENING of the James J. Hill Papers to the public in 1982 by the James Jerome Hill Reference Library in St. Paul has made it possible to put flesh and blood on this builder of empire. In particular, his general correspondence gives insight into the man as his contemporaries viewed him. During the course of research for her teaching, Sister Carol Berg of the history department at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, working under a grant from the Charles Merrill Trust Fund, came across letters that show the broad impact Hill had on everyday people in the Upper Midwest. Berg, whose work on the Benedictines at White Earth appeared in the Winter, 1982, issue of this journal, wrote the following article to give readers a taste of the richness that lies in the Hill Papers.

JAMES J. HILL'S "ability as an organizer and railroad executive, his vision of transportation in the economic life of the state and country, his skill in meeting problems, and the sweep of his interest in agriculture, in-

dustry, and trade made him a true giant in the earth."¹ Few would argue with Theodore C. Blegen's summation of Hill's impact, yet the man himself eludes one in a merely narrative history. For Hill's vision and skills best come alive in concrete issues, actions, times, and places, and in his interactions with people from many areas and in many walks of life.

The famous, the anonymous, the rich, the poor—all wrote to Hill requesting financial aid, political patronage, words of advice. These letters often reveal an image of the man's character as seen through the eyes of the petitioner. One can find both flattery and cold business logic as those petitioners tried to interest Hill in their hopes, dreams, and schemes.

The letters are valuable, too, for the glimpses they give of events and personages in Minnesota and in the nation during a period when both were developing rapidly in population and industry. Within these letters are numerous references to agricultural conditions, to the growing railroad monopolies, to the tariff issue, and to the steady immigration flow.

A sampling of these letters—for the years 1876-1895—gives a taste of what the Hill Papers have to of-

¹ Blegen, *Minnesota, A History of the State* (Reprint ed., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975), 299.

fer. These letters are primarily to Hill, with a very few responses from him (although he often jotted a brief note on the letters indicating what response his secretary should make in full).

IMMIGRATION into Minnesota was heavy during the 1860s and 1870s, partly due to a concerted drive by state officials to court European farmers, but as early as 1855, a territorial Commissioner of Immigration had been appointed.² The Germans, the Scandinavians, and the Irish were the major groups targeted for Minnesota in the post-Civil War era.

As skilled farmers, the Germans were sought especially. Eduard Pelz, an 1850 immigrant to Minnesota, was a major figure in selling the state to his countrymen. In 1858 and again in 1866, Pelz traveled to Germany, publishing reports on the opportunities to be found in Minnesota. In 1870, he established a monthly journal in German, *Der Pfadfinder* (*The Pathfinder*), which contained articles about Minnesota and carried advertisements for the Northern Pacific railway. All of these endeavors paid off: German immigrants poured into Minnesota.³

One of those who most appreciated these Germans was Henry C. Carlisle, who ran a general store in Mound City (now Mound), Hennepin County, for Hill and George S. Acker, his partner in a fuel business. The store carried goods for the business's woodcutters working in nearby camps, and Carlisle would inform his employers of conditions in the area while asking for more items to sell. In one letter Carlisle wrote: "I have been out among the Germans pretty freely & am on the best of terms with them & sell them goods & I think will succeed in getting their trade. The American trade with a few exceptions is not worth anything and it would amuse you to notice the little dirty tricks & low devices [*sic*] they resort to in order to obtain credit. When they find that I can not be easily gulled, then they curse the store, the owners, myself & the goods."⁴

Carlisle repeated this opinion of the relative merits of

the Germans versus the Americans in several more letters as in one of November 27, 1876: "Trade is very good, especially with the Germans, I have succeeded in getting on the best of terms with them. The Yankee trade is very poor all style & talk and *no cash*. Do not want to trust them & what they get they pay for."

The goods Carlisle needed for his farmers and lumberjacks included shoemaker's wax, sleighbells, pants buttons, sewing awls, nails, coat thread, pepper, soap, raisins, pork, sugar, and chewing tobacco, all of which he asked Hill to supply.⁵ His letters appear into the 1880s, requesting specific goods and more credit from the fuel business.

Transporting goods northward became less troublesome for the company after March 13, 1878. On that day, the final contract was signed, selling the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad to Hill and his partners. But the negotiations were well underway in the fall of 1877. A letter from E. V. Holcombe, superintendent of the Red River Transportation Company, congratulated Hill on his acquisition: "knowing as I do that to you belongs the credit as originator of the whole scheme. You have my best wishes for your success in the new field of operations." Hill and his partners would make the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad (renamed the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railroad) so successful that it would expand to become the Great Northern, reaching from Minnesota to Seattle, Washington.⁶

Meanwhile, Hill was still transporting goods—chiefly coal, oil, cement, and salt—by rail and steamboat to points in Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, the Dakotas, and Pennsylvania. He did not always satisfy his customers. A buyer from Waterloo, Iowa, was quite blunt: "if you have been selling us *Poor Coal* for land Sake have a *little good* Sent to us as it dont feel good to

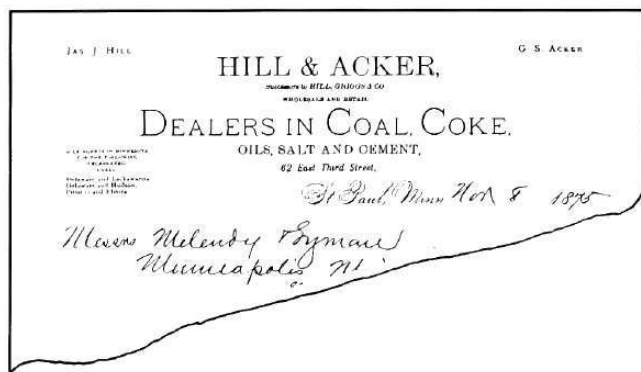
² June D. Holmquist, ed., *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 8.

³ Holmquist, *They Chose Minnesota*, 161; Hildegard B. Johnson, "Eduard Pelz and German Emigration," *Minnesota History* 31 (Dec., 1950): 222-230.

⁴ Carlisle to Hill, Nov. 11, 1876, James J. Hill Papers, James J. Hill Reference Library, St. Paul, Minnesota. All letters cited in this article are in these papers. Beginning as Hill, Griggs & Company in 1869 and changing names and partners several times, the St. Paul fuel business was Hill & Acker in 1875-76 and dealt in wood, coal, and lubricating oil. It later became Northwestern Fuel Company. See Albro Martin, *James J. Hill and the Opening of the Northwest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 96-99, 104-107; Melvin W. Gimmesd, "Some Historical Backgrounds of the Village of Mound, Minnesota" (Research paper in partial fulfillment for Master's degree, Macalester College, 1964), 58-60; and St. Paul city directories, 1873-79.

⁵ Carlisle to Hill, Nov. 21, 1876.

⁶ Holcombe to Hill, Oct. 28, 1877; Martin, *James J. Hill*, 50.



have men say in a crowd that your Coal *aint good*. Cant Sell coal against Such Talk . . . now you Speak about money. That puts me in mind we have got money to Pay Bills any Time and I suppose you have Plenty [*sic*] of coal. Now we will Be just as Prompt to Send Money as you are to Ship Coal." The feisty buyer added a postscript: "Be Shure [*sic*] & send Some of *that good coal*."⁷ Other recipients of Hill's shipping sometimes complained of shortages in the stated tonnage or criticized the small size and dirtiness of the coal.

BUT HILL'S railroad prospered steadily in the 1880s and 1890s, carrying passengers and freight throughout much of the Northwest. However, his and his competitors' railroads came under attack by farmers for what they viewed as exorbitant rates. The Grangers, in particular, accused the railroads of exploitation.

The Grange (Patrons of Husbandry) was founded in 1866 as an attempt to unify farmers on a nationwide scale. Local branches were called Granges and, by 1873, "there were Granges in almost every state, and membership had reached three quarters of a million. Its greatest strength was in the Middle West, but it flourished in the South, too, and along the Pacific Coast." In some states, the Grangers elected members to the legislature in mostly futile attempts to regulate the railroad charges. They passed their peak of influence in the late 1870s—to be replaced by the Farmers' Alliance.⁸

A letter from Hill's banking agent in New York, John S. Kennedy, referred briefly to the Grange: "You must judge how far it may be well to anticipate the Granger Movement by making judicious concessions in rates. I quite agree with you that the control of the Omaha Road passing into the hands of the Vanderbilt party will be apt to stimulate the Granger movement."⁹ Still, the railroads were fairly secure in their position, thanks in great part to the backing of state and federal officials.

There are frequent letters from Representative Martin Maginnis of Montana (1873-1885), who lobbied in Congress for right-of-way bills to aid the railroads in crossing Indian reservations. In a letter to Hill, Maginnis wrote of the support Hill might expect from Knute Nelson, U.S. Representative from Minnesota (1883-1889): "Nelson is all right, now that he understands the

matter—and no bill will pass that is not satisfactory to us—Fortunately, the matter is in his hands."¹⁰

Two weeks later, Maginnis informed Hill that the Senate was forming a commission to "visit & treat with the Indians" since most of the tribes in the Northwest were opposed to the right-of-way bills. He stated: "When it comes to the appointment of the commission . . . some one outside of myself will have to move that I be put at the head of it if it [*is*] thought desirable that you should have control of it." Clearly, Hill had loyal advocates in the nation's capital.

Others were also looking out for Hill's interests (along with their own). Among these was H. A. Foster, manager of the Climax Coal Company in Angus, Iowa. He advised Hill that he had "made a careful examination of the country between Willmar & Spirit Lake: & with the exception of crossing of the Minnesota river the line is a very easy one to build, presenting no engineering difficulties whatever: and passing through very choice & rich farming lands all the way. The country with the exception of 20 to 25 miles is well settled & the unsettled portions are filling up rapidly. Wheat acreage [*is*] about 10% more than 1883. . . . From the best data I could obtain, the new line ought to give your road for the Minneapolis & Duluth markets not less than one million bushels of wheat the first year after completion and take from you at least ten million feet of lumber for local use along its line."¹¹ Wheat and coal were the main products carried by Hill's railroad in the 1880s, with wood a close third.

THE IMPACT of Hill's railroad is depicted in glowing terms by several leading Twin Cities' businessmen who took an extended trip on his line. They wrote: "We take the present occasion to express our admiration of the aggres[s]ive foresight of our fellow townsman, J. J. Hill, Esq. in pushing the lines of the St. Paul, Minneapolis, & Manitoba Railroad with such great energy into that vast and rich country through which we have traveled. He has brought its productions and wealth to our very doors, and it now remains to us as sagacious merchants to cultivate and retain the golden possibilities which lie before us."¹²

These businessmen were not alone in prophesying a bright future for the Northwest. Others, like Nehemiah G. Ordway, former governor of Dakota Territory, worked to "sell" the region to other Americans. In a letter marked "important and confidential," he wrote: "There are large numbers of young men in Maryland, Virginia and even further South who do not want to work at the price of colored labor who can be induced to raise colonies and revive the boom which has died out under the financial depression in the Eastern and Middle States." Ordway's intent to attract Southern whites to the Northwest is interesting in light of the fact

⁷ E. M. Smith to Hill, Nov. 6, 1877.

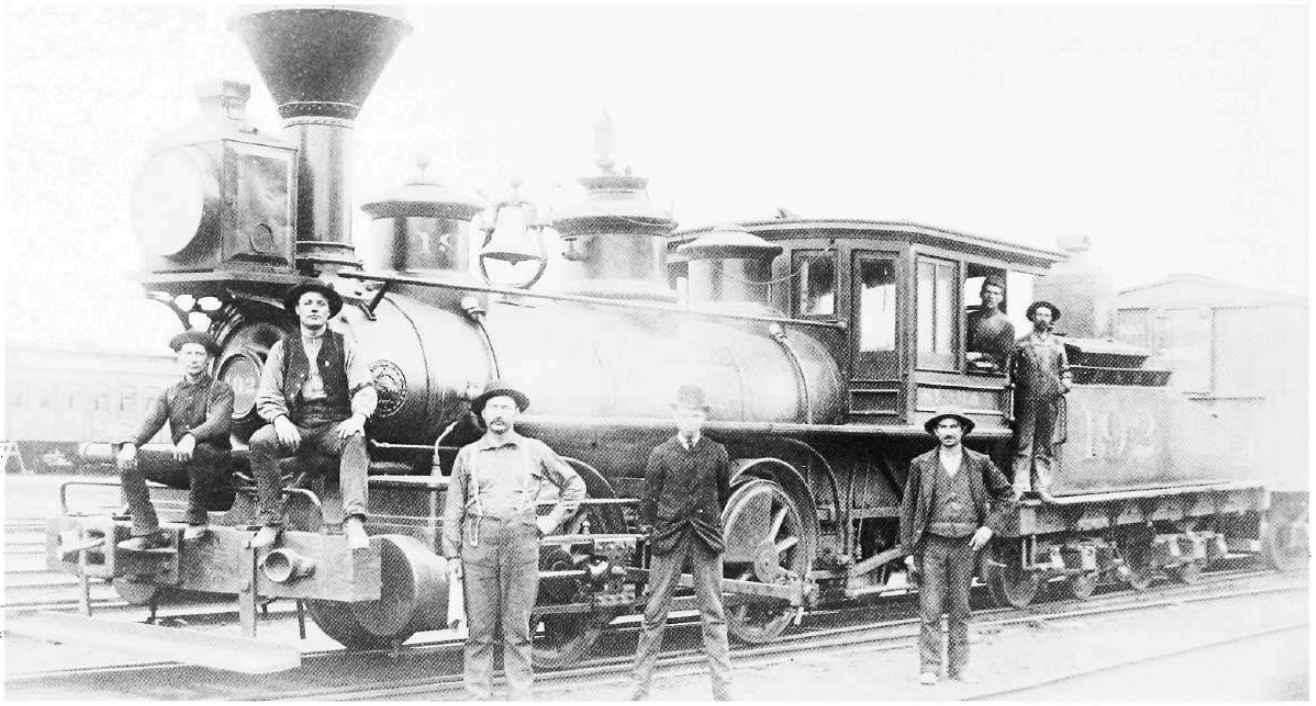
⁸ Allan Nevins and H. S. Commager, *A Pocket History of the U.S.* (New York: Pocket Books, 1981), 325, 326-327; Solon J. Buck, *The Granger Movement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1913).

⁹ Kennedy to Hill, Dec. 20, 1882.

¹⁰ Here and below, see Maginnis to Hill, April 3, 26, 1884.

¹¹ Foster to Hill, May 22, 1884.

¹² George K. Finch, *et al.* to Hill, Aug. 16, 1884.



A SWITCH ENGINE of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railroad, photographed in 1887

that Minnesota in 1860 had "a total population of 780,773 and of these the foreign-born comprised 267,676, roughly, thirty per cent." Most newcomers to Minnesota continued to arrive from Europe via Ellis Island.¹³

Railroads sent agents to Europe (chiefly to Western and Central) to attract people to the United States. Charles P. Reeves, doing such work for Hill, traveled in Germany, drumming up interest in emigration to the American Northwest. His letter of January 10, 1885, gives a summary of his actions: "I have been over here now something over twenty months and during that time have *walked* all over the Harz Mountains & the Major part of the Thuringian Range. [H]ave got the language 'down fine' . . . wherever I have been in the Mts. I have been beset with all sorts of questions about America. [H]ow to get there—where to go—how to take Farms—cost & terms of same—and innumerable other questions all of which I tried to answer to the best of my ability—and without exaggeration to put before them plainly the advantages of Minn., Dak., & Man."¹⁴

Reeves requested materials, "maps and printed matter of any sort," to aid him in his endeavors. He gave details of one group leaving for America: "I know of one party of 16 Ladies and Gentlemen who with their Servants and the Lord only knows how many Dogs are going over in may ostensibly to have a '*big shoot*'—really to look at the country with a view to purchasing Land—the party is composed of retired merchants—Bankers, one Prince & two Barons—with a few Wives

Daughters & Servants (to say nothing of Dogs)."

Reeves was well equipped to win German converts to America since he could speak their language. But he warned Hill that "there is an agent of another Minn road fooling around this neck of the Woods & swearing up & down that there never has & never will be any Grasshoppers & no snow drifts on the line he represents." Reeves added a postscript with a request for a drawing of a "*1st class Engine*—and of an Engine with *Snow Plow* attached."

IT WAS to Hill's advantage to have farms and ranches prosper all along his railroad. To this end, he promoted the raising of purebred cattle as an alternative to grain. Hill imported Aberdeen-Angus bulls from Scotland and gave them or their breeding services free to deserving farmers and ranchers on the Great Northern route.¹⁵



¹³ Ordway to Hill, Dec. 26, 1884; Blegen, *Minnesota*, 307.

¹⁴ Here and two paragraphs below, see Reeves to Hill, Jan. 10, 1885.

¹⁵ James J. Hill note on letter from John R. Campbell, Dec. 29, 1885. See also Martin, *Hill*, 311-314, and Alvin Howard Sanders, *A History of Aberdeen-Angus Cattle* (Chicago: New Breeder's Gazette, 1928), 543-545.

Requests for these bulls were frequent. A typical letter is one from Z. W. Rogers of Bowesmont, Dakota Territory: "we are badly in knead [*sic*] of one in this locality. I do not know of anything in the shape of a well bred animal less than sixteen miles. The farmers along the river are looking more after stock than wheat and it seems a pity not to be raising the right kind when it is just as easy raised as the scrubs. We are in favor of a short horn."¹⁶

Another such request came from Frank E. Parker of Island Lake, Dakota Territory. "I am situated," he wrote, "twenty five miles from the mountains sixty miles from Devils Lake. There is [*sic*] in our settlement about one hundred & fifty set[t]lers & they all have considerable stock & we are with one exception without a bull in our neighborhood & that is a scrub." Parker added the names of twelve men as reference to "my integrity."¹⁷

Hill received several letters from William G. Le Duc, a prominent resident of Hastings who served as commissioner of agriculture in the Rutherford B. Hayes administration. He praised the merits of an Asian animal, the yak, claiming that "the animal has really some valuable and remarkable qualities and traits . . . is said to give excellent milk good for both butter & cheese makes good beef and has a tail that serves as a banner for Royalty in Asia. . . . They are active as surefooted as the best mule and carry heavier burdens through & over mountains of great elevation—live on coarse feed like goats."¹⁸

Although his proposal raised little enthusiasm in Hill, Le Duc kept at it. In January of 1886, he wrote again: "Import a herd of these animals from Asia and place them in Minnesota and Montana any where north or where great elevation made the climate similar to their native home. If prudently and carefully done I believe there is money as well as honor in the scheme."¹⁹ In spite of his own confidence, Le Duc was unable to convince Hill of the yaks' value.

THERE is a section of the Hill Papers labelled "Begging Letters." Some such letters are, however, scattered throughout the "General Correspondence." Most are from individuals, representing families or organizations, asking aid to pay off mortgages, to meet the rent,



WILLIAM G.
LE DUC

to begin construction, to purchase land. Two of the frequent petitioners for and recipients of Hill's donations were St. Joseph's German Catholic Orphan Asylum and the Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged in St. Paul. But there were many other organizations and individuals seeking Hill's favor. One of the most ardent was Archbishop John Ireland.

John Ireland (1838-1918) arrived in Minnesota in 1852, becoming bishop of St. Paul in 1875 and archbishop in 1888. Like Hill, Ireland was a prime mover in the development of Minnesota—in his case, chiefly in the field of religious education. Ireland was busily buying land and building schools during the 1870s and 1880s. In 1876, he began the Minnesota Catholic Colonization Bureau. His plan "involved the cooperation of Church, railroads, and incoming settlers who would occupy railroad lands selected in advance."²⁰ He favored the Irish, many of whom came to Minnesota where he helped them to obtain land, good schools, and their own churches.

Archbishop Ireland was in especially severe financial straits in the spring of 1893—a time of financial depression nationwide. He wrote to Hill about some property he wanted Hill to sell for him: "In striving to dispose of this property, you have before you, I am fully aware, a very difficult task in view, especially, of the present financial condition of the country. You can succeed, if you put all your energies into the work, and this I pray you to do . . . I am simply crushed down with this load of debt. My power for work is impaired . . . I have come to the point, where Something must occur—for weal or woe." He ended his letter with the plea: "Put it to your friends that by taking this property at the figure named they will do me an immeasurable service, *please you*, and, withal, get back in a few years their money with reasonable profit. . . . There is no other way out of this dreadful crisis into which I have got, but your friendship, and in that I put fullest confi-

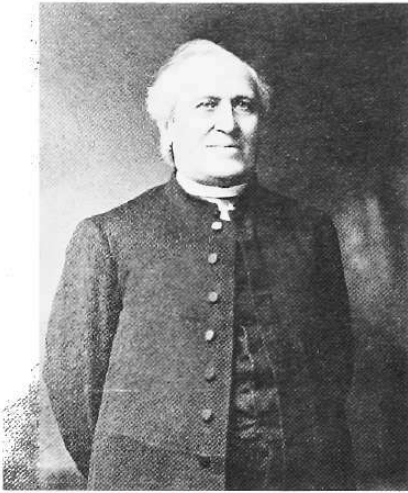
¹⁶ Rogers to Hill, Feb. 9, 1886.

¹⁷ Parker to Hill, May 6, 1886.

¹⁸ William Le Duc to Hill, Dec. 28, 1885; see also Martin, *Hill*, 310.

¹⁹ Le Duc to Hill, Jan. 13, 1886.

²⁰ John J. Delaney, *Dictionary of American Catholic Biography* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), 214; Blegen, *Minnesota*, 309; James P. Shannon, "Bishop Ireland's Conne-mara Experiment," *Minnesota History* 35 (Mar., 1957): 205-213.



ARCHBISHOP
John Ireland

dence. Send me soon word that all is right, and I shall be a happy man.”²¹

Hill wired that he could get no terms for the property. A frantic Ireland wrote back: “I have only to throw myself on your mercy. You have done so much for me already but I do not believe you will abandon me. . . . I shall not need at once the full amount of which the tract would be supposed to bring. But I shall need a good part of it without delay: the remainder can come later. Now, my dear Mr. Hill, send me a telegram, saying that you will take care of me. . . . I need not tell you how great my gratitude will be.”²² But Hill was unable to “save” Ireland in this instance, although he was very generous on other occasions, before and after.

The far-flung reputations of both Hill and Ireland are apparent in another begging letter, this one from County Cork, Ireland. Timothy Sullivan, who described himself as a “poor broaken [*sic*] down irishman who is in bad health about 15 years agoe thrue a fall from hoss.” Assuring Hill that “God would be thankful [if] you helped me,” Sullivan explained he had read all about Hill in a Dublin newspaper “as well as what you gave to the good archbishop ireland.”²³

Another request for financial aid came from John J. Ahern, secretary of the committee to secure an athletic park for St. Paul. He stated: “I know that you are continually annoyed with communications of this kind, but as St. Paul must have a home for her cricket, base ball, lawn-tennis, polo, La Crosse, foot-ball and bicycle clubs in order to keep up with our Sister City we feel as though you would like to help us. Mr. Lowry will do something after our home people make a move.”²⁴

Hill received many begging letters from outstate, too. One came from Booker T. Washington, principal of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama. Washington wrote: “Being of the opinion that if you knew more definitely of its far-reaching effects, you would like to help forward the

work that we are doing here for the elevation of our own race, I take the liberty of sending you the enclosed circular which I think will interest you. We have a large number of poor but worthy students, who do all they can to *help themselves* . . . but the \$50 a year for tuition they are wholly unable to pay, and we are compelled to ask friends to help or turn the students away.”²⁵ Washington set no figure; like others, he left the sum to Hill’s benevolence.

A LARGE NUMBER of requests reached Hill asking his political patronage. One from T. B. Davis, attorney-at-law in Andover, South Dakota, reads: “I am a candidate for appointment as Consul General to the City of Mexico, and would be pleased to have your assistance. I have a good business here that is paying me more than I could expect to get as C.G. but while I was a mere boy I went into the War during the Rebellion and contracted asthma and for that reason I have to keep changing climates. . . . I am 47 years of age and have a family, and would like this or some other appointment where there would be a living in it for me and where I could breath[e] without exercising all my powers. I have always been a Democrat, was named after my fathers schoolmate, Thomas H. Benton, of Mo., and have always used my time and money in furthering the democratic cause. I only want such place as I have earned.”²⁶

In similar fashion, a letter arrived from lawyer Thomas Burke of Seattle, Washington, stating: “I would like if possible to get your personal support for the appointment by the president of Mr. Thomas F. Drew of this city, as United States Consul to Nicaragua, Central America, to be stationed at Managua. . . . I have, I am free to admit, my eye on the commercial advantages which might possibly come to Seattle from having a person having interests here occupying the post of United States Consul at Nicaragua.”²⁷

Closer to home was the petition of R. F. Pettigrew, Senator from South Dakota: “I wrote you about recommending the appointment of Bernard Brown for Surveyor General of Montana. Senator Power says that Brown will be friendly to the northernpart of the state and that surveys will be made where you most desire to have them. . . . I don’t know much about Brown but I should say that you could afford to recommend him on Power’s account.”²⁸ This request was typical of the many which link Hill’s and the petitioner’s interests.

²¹ Ireland to Hill, April 27, 1893.

²² Ireland to Hill, May 10, 1893.

²³ Sullivan to Hill, Sept. 26, 1894.

²⁴ Ahern to Hill, April 10, 1893.

²⁵ Washington to Hill, Oct. 3, 1893.

²⁶ Davis to Hill, Mar. 30, 1893.

It must have warmed Hill's heart considerably when he occasionally received a letter of thanks and praise, making no request for money. Two examples will round out this look at correspondence to Hill. The first, from Philip D. Armour of the Chicago meat-packing family, reports on a trip he and some companions took over the Great Northern route: "I wish to thank you warmly for the courtesies shown us on the Great Northern. . . . We were well impressed with Great Falls. We spent something over a day there, and enjoyed it very, very much. . . . You, certainly have done a great deal for it in getting the smelters there, as well as other industries I was greatly pleased with the country along the line of your Road from Great Falls eastward—in fact, I would say that I was greatly surprised at the richness of the soil and the lay of the land . . . and in time I believe it will be one of the most prolific regions in America . . . we are all really in ecstasies over what we think is the future of your System up to Great Falls."²⁹

In a lighter vein, Bernhard Sampson of Crookston wrote most flatteringly on September 19, 1894, informing Hill that he had named his son, born two-and-one-half years earlier but not yet baptized, after him. Accompanying the letter was a photograph of young James Hill Sampson in one of the long dresses then worn by small children of both sexes. The proud father declared: "We have all in the family unanimous [*sic*] decided to name him after you and we are in hopes that you will allow us to do so and give us your full name. . . . I shall also give you the reasons for giving the boy such a name and those are to transplant the business ideas which you have brought about into some younger soil. My wife calls the boy James Hill for the reason that you have done more for the Northwest than any other man and should not be forgotten. . . . Our best wishes are that God grant you more days to live and your business ideas live forever." Who could resist? Somebody, perhaps Hill's private secretary, F. E. Ward, jotted a terse "Send Mug" across the top of the letter. On September 24 Ward wrote to Sampson, "I am send-



BABY James Hill Sampson, 1894, and his father Bernhard (inset)

ing you . . . by Great Northern Express today, a silver mug, to be presented to your son with Mr. Hill's best wishes."³⁰

Years later Sampson wrote again to Hill, congratulating him upon his 67th birthday and musing about his own early struggles and Hill's impact on the Northwest. "I left St. Paul May 10th 1870 and at that time I had no more money than for what I could pay for one ox and two wheels of a wagon in company with another party . . . we traveled through the country . . . to Pembina and then west into Dakota using the blue heaven for tent and the green grass for mattress but the 5th of Dec. when we rised in the morning we found our bedding covered with snow . . . when I think of my trip at that time without any railroads then I appreciate what you have done for us people in this upper country."³¹

This writer found it hard to stop digging into the folders of "General Correspondence." The foregoing excerpts are only the "tip of the iceberg" for anyone wanting to learn more about Hill and his influence on the Northwest and on the country in general. Real riches await avid readers.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS on p. 72 and 77 are from the James J. Hill Papers as is the small engraving on p. 74; all other pictures are in the MHS audio-visual library.

²⁷ Burke to Hill, June 21, 1893.

²⁸ Pettigrew to Hill, Oct. 27, 1893.

²⁹ Armour to Hill, Mar. 22, 1894.

³⁰ Sampson to Hill, Sept. 19, 1894; Ward to Sampson, Sept. 24, 1894. Sampson (1839-1923) was an old friend of Hill and one of the earliest settlers in Crookston, homesteading there in 1872. His donation of land for a roadbed to Hill's St. Paul & Pacific Railroad influenced the track's route and the growth of Crookston. Bernhard and his wife, Petra Bjornstad, had 11 children besides James Hill, including Harold Bismarck and William McKinley. See Polk County Historical Society, *Bicentennial History of Polk County, Minnesota* (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Co., 1976), 12-16.

³¹ Sampson to Hill, Sept. 15, 1905.



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